

CORRESPONDENCE.

A Relative of Alexander Wilson.

TO THE EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs:—The only relatives of Alexander Wilson, the great American ornithologist, that ever emigrated from Scotland to the United States, to my knowledge, were the Duncans. Mrs. Duncan, who had lost her husband in Scotland, was a sister of Alexander Wilson, and William Duncan, her oldest son, accompanied Wilson across the ocean, while Mrs. Duncan and her next oldest son, Alexander Duncan, together with several smaller children, came on to this country a little later.

In one of Wilson's letters attached to his biography he says: "Two of the Purdies popped into my school as unexpected as they were welcome, with news from the Promised land." One of the "Purdies" was my father, and the other his brother. My father was a great friend of Wilson and the Duncans and more especially of Alexander Duncan, who was nearer his age. They were bare-footed boys together and their friendship remained unbroken until parted by death some time after reaching the ripe old age of four score years. I have known Alexander Duncan to walk ten miles on foot, after he was eighty years of age, to visit my father.

Alexander Duncan settled on a farm near South Lyon, Oakland County, Michigan, and had two sons, Robert and James, and several daughters, only two of whom are now living. One daughter lives at Ann Arbor, Mich., and James Duncan now occupies the old homestead near South Lyon, Mich. His father and mother are buried on the old farm, on a little patch of ground fenced off for that purpose, and there, under those little grassy mounds, lies all that is mortal of poor old Alexander Duncan and his wife.

James Duncan has been quite prosperous and has added to the old homestead until he now owns nearly eight hundred acres of good farming land, including a fine grove on the banks of Silver Lake. Here he has a tent, stove, and cooking utensils where he delights to entertain his friends on fishing excursions, picnics, etc. He is not much of an ornithologist, but loves his dogs and gun, and makes his annual trips to northern Michigan in pursuit of deer, his favorite game. In stature he is tall and erect, with piercing blue eyes, and light curly hair that hangs in ringlets nearly to his shoulders, and in movements, will, and determination, he seems greatly to resemble his noted relative Alexander Wilson.

Yours truly,

JAMES B. PURDY.

Plymouth, Michigan.